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Novak Druce Opens Silicon Valley Office

By **Richard Vanderford**

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Law360, New York (September 07, 2011, 5:09 PM ET) -- Intellectual property firm Novak Druce & Quigg LLP said Tuesday that it has opened a new Silicon Valley office in Cupertino, Calif., to be closer to clients, including famous Cupertino resident Apple Inc.

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The office will be the firm's second in Northern California — it opened shop in San Francisco in 2007. Novak Druce CEO Gregory V. Novak told Law360 he plans to aggressively expand the firm's presence in the Bay Area.

"We're in discussions with several potential laterals right now to come into Cupertino," he said.

"We definitely want to grow more," he said. "Our goal is really to take some dominance out in the IP market out here."

So far, Novak Druce has staffed its Silicon Valley with about six attorneys, Novak said. It hopes to add more partners and associates over the next two years, until its Bay Area attorney count is about 50 —double its present size, he said.

The firm, which focuses exclusively on IP, is well known for its litigation-driven patent re-examination practice, which Novak says is the largest in the country.

Novak wants to establish the firm as a premier IP "super-boutique," he said.

"It's been years since a firm like that has emerged," he said. "We can't really think of in recent times another IP firm that has developed an IP platform like we have."

Much of that development has been on the strength of California's technology sector. The firm's California offices now drive Novak Druce's patent, trademark, litigation and patent re-examination practices, he said.

Novak Druce employs 80 attorneys in Houston, Silicon Valley, San Francisco, Washington, and West Palm Beach, Fla.

In recent months, Novak Druce added to its Silicon Valley profile by hiring attorneys from law firms, particularly the defunct Howrey LLP. In April the firm announced it had hired ex-Howrey patent specialist Patricia A. Kammerer to its Houston office.

She had worked at Howrey for 11 years, since the 2000 merger with her previous firm, Arnold White & Durkee PC. Kammerer said she was one of the first working in the biotech field in patent law.

Days earlier, Novak announced that it hired Michael J. Bell, Howrey's former national intellectual property practice co-chair, to work at its Washington office.

In his 14-year stint at Howrey, Bell focused his practice primarily on transactional work and patent prosecution, with a heavy emphasis on business method patents. He also focused on client counseling and the preparation of patent applications and related filings.

Howrey partners Henry "Hank" A. Petri and Janelle D. Waack joined Novak Druce's Houston office in early March.

Also in March, Novak Druce announced it had also hired international prosecution specialist Raymond J. Ho from Dithavong Mori & Steiner PC to join its Washington office as of counsel.

--Additional reporting by Carolina Bolado. Editing by Kat Laskowski.

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